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Cover: Tufted Titmouse at Beltsville, May 18, 1973.  
Photo by Patricia P. Grant



## M.O.S. BLUEBIRD PROJECT RESULTS FOR 1973

*Lawrence Zeleny*

In 1969, when the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) population in Maryland reached the lowest figure on record, the Maryland Ornithological Society organized a project to halt the downward trend and hopefully restore this attractive and beneficial species to something approaching its former numbers. This report covers the activities of the project for 1973. The 1972 results were summarized in *Maryland Birdlife* 28: 98-99, September 1972.

An estimated 1,191 young bluebirds were fledged from MOS Bluebird Project boxes in 1973. Table 1 shows the approximate number of bluebirds fledged in connection with the project each year since 1969.

Table 1. Number of Bluebirds Fledged Each Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Young Fledged</u>
1969	246
1970	503
1971	688
1972	797
1973	<u>1,191</u>
Total	3,425

Although this record is highly encouraging, the data cannot be interpreted to mean that there has been such a dramatic increase in the bluebird population of the region since 1969. The increase each year in the number of young birds fledged has resulted largely from a broader participation in the project and in increases in the numbers of nesting boxes set out by many of the collaborators, particularly those who are operating bluebird trails. The bluebird population, however, has increased greatly in various local areas where considerable numbers of nesting boxes have been maintained for a number of years.

Where Starlings are numerous during the nesting season, bluebirds are rarely able to nest successfully in natural cavities. Hence the bluebirds nearly disappear from most of these areas unless they are supplied with sufficient numbers of Starling-proof nesting boxes. Starlings

appear to be encroaching farther and farther into the more remote breeding areas where the bluebirds have been forced to take refuge. This persistent trend is causing the bluebirds to become more and more dependent on man for their survival.

Table 2 shows the general locations (usually the nearest town) where successful bluebird nestings were reported by collaborators in 1973 and the approximate numbers of young bluebirds fledged at each location.

Table 2. Successful Bluebird Nestings in Maryland

<u>Location</u>	<u>Young fledged</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Young fledged</u>
Accokeek	42	Greenbelt (Goddard)	14
Adamstown	23	Harwood	7
Beltsville (ARC)	201	Laurel	113
Bethesda	7	Lusby	59
Boonesboro (Wash.Co.)	12	New Port	9
Bristol	20	Potomac & west to	
Catonsville	21	Sycamore Landing	123
Cheltenham	25	Rock Creek Park	8
Clarksburg	18	Rockville	8
Clarksville	9	Rossmoor	34
Clear Spring	17	Sharpsburg	3
Conowingo	15	Smithsburg	71
Dunkirk	95	Sunderland	101
Fort Meade	72	Tantalon	10
Frederick	2	Upper Marlboro	4
Gaithersburg	2	Westminster	3
Galesville	43	Total	1,191

#### PROJECTS WORTHY OF SPECIAL MENTION

Special mention should be made of the results reported by a few of the collaborators who obtained particularly noteworthy results.

Bluebird Trails of McKnight and Stewart. Edwin T. McKnight and David B. Stewart were increasingly successful this year; their trail of 20 bluebird nesting boxes between Potomac and Sycamore Landing in Montgomery County resulted in the fledging of 79 young bluebirds.

Bluebird Trails of the Boone Brothers. Jon and Daniel Boone were particularly successful with two of their four bluebird trails. Their trail of 29 boxes in Pleasant Valley near Smithsburg in Washington County produced 71 young bluebirds. At Dunkirk in Calvert County, 17 boxes yielded 95 young.

Fort Meade. Mrs. Rena Bishop expanded her trail at Fort Meade to 24 boxes from which 72 young bluebirds were fledged.

Lusby, Calvert County. Mrs. Christopher Wohlgemuth raised 59 bluebirds in 7 boxes on the spacious grounds of her home near Lusby. Mrs. Wohlgemuth reported that in all previous years her success was severely limited by snake predation. This year she mounted all of her boxes on 3/8 inch inside diameter galvanized pipes and kept the pipes greased. She lost no eggs or nestlings to predators. She believes that the small diameter of the pipes may have been a factor in protecting the nests from snakes. This possibility needs further study.

Sunderland. Lester Denton increased the number of nesting boxes on his farm and on a neighbor's farm near Sunderland in Calvert County to 30, from which 101 young bluebirds were fledged in spite of heavy losses from two-legged predators.

The Beltsville Bluebird Trail. The writer continued to operate the bluebird trail on the grounds of the Agricultural Research Center near Beltsville in Prince Georges County. Seventy-five nesting boxes were maintained this year, and 201 young bluebirds were fledged in 55 successful broods. For at least 12 years the Starling has been the predominant species in this area during the nesting season. Starlings have usurped virtually all of the natural cavities formerly used by nesting bluebirds and had almost completely eliminated bluebirds from the area until Starling-proof nesting boxes were set out in 1967.

Other cooperators who reported fledging more than 20 bluebirds were Harold Norwood, who had 59 birds fledge from 77 eggs in the Laurel area; Eleanor Robbins, whose boxes raised 29 birds from 57 eggs, also in the Laurel area; Kathleen Klimkiewicz, who raised 38 young at Piscataway Park; Richard and Sally Rule, with 34 successful young at Rossmoor; and Sister Barbara Ann, with 21 fledglings at All Saints Convent at Catonsville.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Assistance and advice on bluebird conservation matters have been rendered either directly or indirectly to thousands of interested people throughout the country in addition to the lectures and demonstrations given locally.

Information and assistance in establishing a bluebird trail on the 1,200 acre grounds of Goddard Space Flight Center near Greenbelt were requested and supplied. A 50 nesting box trail was set out by Charles Dupree in early March. The trail was moderately successful considering that it was in its first year.

The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland requested assistance and advice in establishing a bluebird trail at their Bell Manor Program Center near Conowingo in Cecil County. The girls made 85 nesting boxes and set most of them out on the spacious grounds of the Center. A few bluebird nestings were reported there this year. More can be anticipated in future years.

A successful bluebird trail was established on the 450-acre grounds of the U.S. Navy Communications Station at Cheltenham in Prince Georges County. Instructions for this project were supplied by MOS on request.

An article on bluebird conservation in the Autumn 1972 issue of *The Living Wilderness* resulted in more than 4,500 requests in 1973 for MOS bluebird instruction sheets. These were reprinted and supplied by The Wilderness Society with MOS permission. This was said to be the greatest public response to any article ever published by The Wilderness Society.

A somewhat similar article in the April 1973 issue of *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* resulted in a flood of requests to MOS for additional information.

For the fourth straight year the *Purple Martin Capital News* has published each month a "Bluebird Trail" column by the writer. Hundreds of requests for additional information are received every year from readers in almost all parts of the country.

The impact of these various educational activities on a country-wide basis in terms of nesting boxes erected and young bluebirds fledged is impossible to assess, but it has probably been far greater than the totals reported by the collaborators who participated directly in the project.

Perhaps the most significant development of the year was a decision by the Camp Fire Girls at their headquarters in New York to inaugurate a "Project Save the Bluebirds" on a nation-wide basis in 1974. The decision was based largely on the success of our project and the publicity it has received. It is intended that the Camp Fire Girl project be carried out by the younger girls of the organization, who have long been known as "Blue Birds," with adult help and supervision. The new edition of the "Camp Fire Blue Bird Leader's Resource Book" devotes six pages to a detailed discussion of the project. If this project is carried out as planned it could prove to be a great boon to bluebirds throughout the country. Perhaps even more important, however, is the fact that it may instill into the minds of some 200,000 of the finest young girls of the country at their most impressionable age a love for living things and an understanding of the serious problems that face some of our most cherished species of wildlife. Your Bluebird Project chairman is honored in serving as the Camp Fire Girls' consultant for this project.

#### PLANS FOR 1974

Much greater participation in our Bluebird Project is needed to accomplish our objective. All MOS members and their friends who have access to rural property are urged to participate and to interest others. Collaborators who had most or all of their nesting boxes occupied by bluebirds this year should arrange to have additional boxes set out in the same general area, since many of the young bluebirds fledged in 1973 will likely return to the area to nest in 1974. For best results the boxes should be set out by March 1.

For printed instructions for building, mounting, and selecting suitable locations for bluebird nesting boxes, write to MOS headquarters at Cylburn Mansion. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

4312 Van Buren St., University Park



## LATE SUMMER MATING OF THE BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO

*David Lee and Barbara Rothgaber*

On August 23, 1972 we observed a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) mating. Because it was so late in the season and because little information is available concerning the courtship of this species, the following observations seem noteworthy.

The cuckoos flew out of a swamp bordering the Savage River State Forest, near Cunningham Lake, Garrett County, Maryland (elevation 2800 feet). The swamp is unnamed and feeds into an unnamed tributary of Cherry Creek. The female flew across a clearing ahead of the male to the edge of the surrounding woods and perched about twenty-five feet above the ground in a Red Maple. The male flew from branch to branch, finally perching about four feet above and to one side of the female. The female pumped her tail up and down four or five times immediately prior to coition; the birds remained together only a few seconds, then separated. The birds remained in the same tree at the same level for the next fifteen minutes and were still there when we left. John Willetts told us that he has also observed the tail pumping behavior prior to mating in this species.

This mating was well past the known reproductive period for this species in Maryland. In fact, it was well into their fall migration period (Stewart and Robbins, Birds of Md and DC, 1958). Black-billed Cuckoos were heard calling frequently in this area during the week of August 19-25.

*Natural History Society of Md., 2643 N. Charles St., Baltimore*

## AN ANNOTATED LIST OF AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES AND MAMMALS OF IRISH GROVE SANCTUARY, SOMERSET COUNTY, MARYLAND

*David S. Lee*

The following is a list of the species of amphibians, reptiles, and mammals that live on the property of Irish Grove Sanctuary. Although I am sure that many other species will turn up in the future, it seems desirable to publish this list now. Hopefully this in turn will not only make M.O.S. members more aware of the diversified fauna of the area, but will stimulate the reporting of additional species. Flora and fauna surveys are long overdue for all our sanctuaries; the only comprehensive



lists seem to be for birds. If the sanctuaries are to be used for educational purposes, other areas of natural history should not be neglected. Species lists or, better yet, detailed ecological studies, will also provide us with valuable base line information for future evaluation of population fluctuations and/or successional patterns.

Several species mentioned below have not previously been reported from Somerset County (Harris, 1969; Paradiso, 1969; and Lee, *et al.*, 1972); these are indicated with an asterisk (\*). I would like to thank numerous students from my field biology classes who spent several weekends beating through the greenbrier thickets looking for additional species. Mrs. Richard Cole and Paul Bystrak provided much useful information and the Barn Owls supplied much of the mammal material and collected several species which I had overlooked. Dr. Elmer Worthley kindly read over the botanical descriptions.

Irish Grove consists of 1,400+ acres, which are divided into three major plant communities--tidal marsh, woodlands, and fields and hedgerows. The following community descriptions are sketchy at best but will give the reader some idea of the terrain:

A. At the edge of the tidal marsh and on elevated areas are groundsel shrubs (*Baccharis halimifolia*) and marsh elder (*Iva frutescens*). The marsh itself consists of several sub-communities, depending, among other variables, on elevation and drainage. The more conspicuous plants are maritime sedge (*Scirpus maritima*), black needle rush (*Juncus roemerianus*), salt meadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), and salt marsh cordgrass (*S. alterniflora*).

B. The woodlands are dominated by loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*). American holly (*Ilex opaca*), black chokeberry (*Pyrus melanocarpa*), sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), service berry (*Amelanchier* sp.), and wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) abound. Poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*) and cat-briar (*Smilax glauca*) make much of the woodlands difficult to study.

C. The fields and hedgerows are artificially maintained. The hedgerows are typical of the coastal plain, being composed of many species; trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and wax myrtle are the most conspicuous, if not the most common. The fields themselves are low (4 feet above sea level) and, in many areas, poorly drained, in spite of many ditches. In places, the fields should be considered marsh-field ecotones. Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), common reed (*Phragmites communis*), and cordgrass (*Spartina cynosuroides*) all indicate marsh ecotones. Beard grass (*Andropogon* sp.), rushes (*Juncus* sp.); Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and others also occur here. In many areas the fields are being invaded by seedling loblolly pines.

#### Species List

##### AMPHIBIANS

Red-backed Salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*). Two specimens (red phase) were found under logs and leaf litter in the pine forest, April



1973. This species must be more common than this one record indicates, but intensive collecting has failed to reveal additional individuals.

\*American Toad (*Bufo americanus*). Uncommon. A few singing males are heard each spring. This woodland species seems to be absent from the upper Delmarva. Breeds in March and April; voice is a long high trill. Tadpoles transform in June.

Fowler's Toad (*Bufo fowleri*). Common. Associated with open and/or sandy areas. Breeding takes place from mid-April through early summer. Voice is less musical, more nasal, and lower in pitch than the American Toad. Eggs and larvae appear to be somewhat salt tolerant.

Cricket Frog (*Acris crepitans*). Common. P. Bystrak reports seeing this frog in ponds and ditches. Calls throughout late spring and summer. Voice is a metallic clicking *gick, gick, gick...*

Green Treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*). Abundant. This treefrog reaches the northern limit of its range in the bay area. Although this same species is commonly associated with fresh water ponds and marshes in the south it is seldom found far from coastal areas here in Maryland; the largest populations occur immediately adjacent to tidal areas. Like the preceding species, the Green Treefrog can breed in mildly brackish water. Males call from emergent vegetation throughout the late spring and summer. Voice is a loud series of single notes....*quonk, quonk, quonk...*

Spring Peeper (*Hyla cruaifer*). Common. This small frog can be heard calling from fresh water ditches throughout warmer periods of the winter and early spring. Peepers breed much earlier on the lower Delmarva than elsewhere in the State. This frog and the following species are sometimes heard as early as December. Its high peeping single note is well known.

Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*). Common. This frog breeds at approximately the same time as the Spring Peeper, but Choruses peak earlier in the season and usually the Chorus Frog terminates its reproductive period by mid-March. Most eggs are deposited in temporary rain pools bordering fields. Voice is a penetrating and grating *it-it* given many times without a stop.

\*Narrow-mouthed Toad (*Gastrophryne carolinensis*). Rare. This species is rare in the bay area, the northern limit of its range. Many of the statements pertaining to the ecological distribution of the Green Treefrog may fit this species as well. This is the only reptile or amphibian presently known from Irish Grove that is on Maryland's Rare and Endangered Species List. The mating call is very similar to that of the Fowler's Toad making it difficult to identify this species by voice. I have heard this frog on only two occasions (May 15, 27, 1972) calling from drainage ditches near the sanctuary house. The species' presence was later confirmed from a series of tadpoles collected on the sanctuary. Any additional records of the Narrow-mouthed Toad should be reported. This amphibian is known to feed almost exclusively on ants.

Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*). Probably common. Young individuals (but no tadpoles) are common in several ditches bordering the property. Breeding adults not recorded. Its voice is a series of base grunts, described as *jug-o'-rum*.

Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*). Abundant. Thousands of Leopard Frogs are sometimes seen after spring rains. Individuals are frequently encountered in any wet open area. Most tadpoles collected on the sanctuary in May 1972 (that were over an inch in length) represent this species. I have heard this frog only in the spring, but I suspect that its breeding period is much longer. Its voice resembles a rattling snore with a few grunt-like chuckling notes added here and there.

#### REPTILES

Hognose Snake (*Heterodon platyrhinos*). I have not seen this species on the sanctuary property, but Harris (1969) notes a specimen from Rumbly Point. Should be present in open, sandy areas.

Black Racer (*Coluber constrictor*). Common. Found in all areas except salt marsh. Most frequently seen near field edges and outbuildings.

Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*). Common. Found in all habitats except salt marsh. Several individuals can usually be found around the barn. In May 1973, while searching the attic of the sanctuary house for bats, I found a five foot specimen coiled in the rafters. In June 1973 seven shed skins, all from adult Rat Snakes, were removed from the attic.

King Snake (*Lampropeltis getulus*). Several Towson High School students found a four foot King Snake crossing one of the dikes leading into the marsh (March 1973). P. Bystrak found one individual in a needle rush marsh 1/4 mile from the nearest woods (May 1972). G. Cole saw another individual crossing the road leading to the house (May 1973).

Common Water Snake (*Natrix sipedon*). Common. Found throughout the area in fresh-water ditches and in brackish ponds and ditches. Frequently encountered in salt marsh bordering permanently flooded areas. Marsh populations appear to feed primarily on killifishes.

Brown (DeKay's) Snake (*Storeria dekayi*). Arnold Norden informed me that he found one adult individual in the spring of 1973 on property immediately bordering the sanctuary. This snake is characteristic of lots and fields; their populations appear to be directly dependent on the amount of ground cover available.

\*Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*). One adult individual found dead on Rumbly Point Road in front of sanctuary, March 1971. Fields and ditches are on each side of the road.

Ribbon Snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*). Probably common. P. Bystrak caught several on the north section of the property. This snake is usually associated with wet, open areas.

Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon subrubrum*). Common. Often seen in freshwater ditches and larger rain pools. Occasionally found in tidal ditches.

Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*). Not common. One individual was seen crossing the road bordering the property in June 1971. Tracks of a large adult were near Round Pond in May 1973.

\*Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*). Several Towson High School students found one adult on the sanctuary property in April 1973.

Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemmys terrapin*). Probably common. Most often seen in the larger tidal creeks during incoming and high tides. Fecal material of an adult female collected in May 1972 indicated a diet consisting primarily of small mollusks.

#### MAMMALS

Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*). Common. Tracks are common and indicate that the species is found throughout the sanctuary. Night hikes along the nature trails will usually turn up at least one individual. Opossums are often seen around the barn and sanctuary house at night.

Least Shrew (*Cryptotis parva*). Common. Nineteen skulls of this shrew were found in Barn Owl pellets between March and November 1971 (Lee, *et al.*, 1972). Continued monitoring of owl pellets has revealed only one or two additional specimens. Preliminary trapping in the drier portions of the marsh indicates that the Least Shrew may be relatively common in this habitat.

\*Eastern Mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*). Common. The burrows of this mole are common and widespread in the drier parts of the woods, fields, and lawn area around the sanctuary house.

Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*). One specimen was collected and several others were observed in April 1973. At least one, perhaps two additional species of bats were observed flying over the sanctuary, but they could not be identified. Bat records for the entire Delmarva are not common.

\*Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*). Common. Widespread and common where there is suitable cover. Does not appear to enter the marsh.

\*Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Uncommon. Restricted to the drier portions of loblolly forest, feeding to a considerable extent on the cones of this pine. Large numbers of gnawed cones can usually be found along the Round Pond trail.

Rice Rat (*Oryzomys palustris*). Common. These rodents live in the wetter portions of the marsh. In late winter the runways of Rice Rats and voles can easily be found by turning back the matted *Spartina* grass.

We noted that the Rice Rat made up almost 15% of the diet of the Barn Owl in 1971 (Lee, *et al.*, 1972). This is another southeastern coastal plain species that appears to be primarily restricted to tidal areas in the northern part of its range.

\*White-footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*). Common. Found in all habitats except the salt marsh. Most abundant in woodlands, but I have trapped a few individuals in fields and several in and around the outbuildings. This mouse and the House Mouse are seldom represented in the pellets of the Irish Grove owls. This is probably more indicative of the owls' foraging area than of the abundance of these mice.

Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*). Very abundant. This rodent occurs throughout the higher portions of the marsh and the marsh ecotones. It is probably in the fields as well. This is the most common terrestrial vertebrate on the sanctuary. *Microtus* is the major food item of the Barn Owl throughout the lower bay area. I have found that this rodent makes up 62-97% of the diet of the owls at Irish Grove. I would suspect that this species is also the major prey of Marsh Hawks that winter in the area. During periods of high population density many individuals will be encountered during a morning's walk in the marsh.

\*Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*). Uncommon. I have seen only a couple of Muskrat lodges and/or their inhabitants during the last three years, although I would suspect that many individuals have dens concealed in the heavily vegetated dikes. Much of the marsh on the property is too high and dry to support Muskrat populations.

Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). Not common. G. Cole informs me that rats were quite numerous around the outbuildings at the time the property was purchased. The species is still present, and occasionally individuals are seen around the barn.

House Mouse (*Mus musculus*). Abundant. Common in the house where they have been quite a nuisance. I once trapped 10 individuals in 10 traps set in one night. They also abound in the fields and are one of the most common mammals there. This mouse is not found in woodlands or marshes.

\*Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). I have seen several individuals in the fields and edges of the woods. Several other members have reported seeing this fox on occasion.

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Common. Observed in all parts of the sanctuary.

\*Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). Uncommon. Paradiso (1969) indicates that this species is lacking from the lower eastern shore and cites only one record from the Maryland Delmarva (Blackwater Wildlife Refuge). Handley and Patton (1947) did not record the species from either of the eastern shore counties of Virginia. Irish Grove therefore seems not only to be one of the few areas where this skunk is found but

perhaps represents the southernmost point on the eastern shore where it is found. G. Cole told me of seeing several individuals. I have seen diggings which I presume to be made by this species on several occasions. In May 1973 I found one set of tracks near Round Pond.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Common. Frequently seen in the fields and along the edges of the marsh.

It is of interest to note that there is a strong correlation between the species (and their relative abundance) listed here and those reported from Assateague Island (Paradiso and Handley, 1965; Lee, 1972). I would suspect that occasional local flooding of both areas selects out many species that are less salt tolerant.

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*Department of Mammalogy, Natural History Society of Maryland*

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

On Nov. 17, the Executive Council of M.O.S. met at Cylburn. Among the items of business were committee reports. The Sanctuary Committee had met on Nov. 10; Mr. Unger sent a two-page report resulting from that meeting. From that report I quote the following:

"The first major item for consideration was a plan to establish liaison between the state Sanctuary Committee and the local committees. Ways of making local chapters aware of their participation in the total M.O.S. sanctuary program were discussed. The suggestion was made that a program might be prepared for presentation to local groups upon request, consisting of colored slides with a running commentary, each individual sanctuary committee contributing pictures and script. It was pointed out that two such programs have been prepared and presented in the past by Messrs. Dickson Preston and Paul Bystrak and might need only updating.

"Mrs. Donald spoke of the new Adventure project--a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission located in Potomac,

Maryland, for which Hood College and the M.O.S. act as joint trustees. A program aimed at providing opportunities for research and education is already underway, to be supplemented shortly by the services of a resident naturalist provided by the Park and Planning Commission.

"The Chairman reported that the State has contracted to purchase Rock Run Sanctuary from Mr. Paul's estate. Our future there is questionable at this time; however, no change is expected at least for the winter season."

Dr. Benjamin F. Poscover, Chairman of the Education Committee, presented a report. (This Committee is the successor to the Committee on Leadership Training.) Plans for the Adult Leadership Training program were presented; these plans have already been published in the September issue of *Maryland Birdlife* (29: 124-125). It is hoped that the response will be enthusiastic. This project is another example of M.O.S. in action. Remember that the deadline for registration is March 5. If you have any ideas for the Education Committee to consider, contact Dr. Benjamin Poscover, 302-A Garden Road, Baltimore 21204.

At the Council Meeting, Col. Bodenstein, Chairman of the Conservation Committee, announced that the Worcester Environmental Protection Fund, Inc. is requesting contributions in order to help in their court fight against the Harbortown development. Harbortown is a proposed 3,200-acre development which would directly affect one-fifth to one-quarter of the remaining undeveloped Chincoteague Bay frontage in Worcester County. The development would include business, hotel, apartment, marina and residential uses. It would be the first major development on this shoreline. And its approval would set a precedent hard to reverse. Because this fight is a matter of the Court and not of the Legislature, we are free to support it without jeopardizing our tax exempt status. Feel free to back the Fund by word as well as money.

The Harford Chapter has arranged for the Harford Community College to offer a 10-week non-credit course on bird identification. The course will be taught by Mrs. Jean Worthley and will be held at Bel Air Senior High School, Building No. 2 (the building closest to the Safeway Store). Cost will be \$13 for registration; time is 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings, Mar. 7 to May 16. If interested, call Mrs. Paula Low (838-1000 for local calls, 879-8920 ext. 269 for others).

As yet there have been few applications for our three scholarships to Audubon Workshops (formerly called Audubon Nature Camps). Time is getting short.

Our Treasurer has to make quarterly payments for the recently acquired 110 acres at Carey Run. The contributions resulting from our campaign were \$11,462.72 in cash and \$600.00 in pledges. Hearty thanks to all contributors. Because the contributors to date have been a very small percent of our total membership, I remind our members that we have this obligation and that further additions to our lists of contributors are welcome. Also, contributions from Chapters that have not yet donated will be gladly received.

Barclay E. Tucker



## AN EASILY MADE BLUEBIRD HOUSE

*Paul W. Woodward*

In recent years a great deal of concern has been expressed about the future of the Eastern Bluebird (Zeleny, *Md. Birdlife*, 25:138-142, 1969). Lack of suitable nesting sites is a major problem, but one that can be solved to a large degree by erecting nesting boxes in suitable habitats. However, building wooden boxes can be time consuming and expensive and also requires some carpentry ability and tools, both of which I lack. To remedy this situation, I have been using, with notable success, nesting boxes at Hughes Hollow, west of Seneca in Montgomery County, Md., that are made from milk cartons. I think if more people knew about this very simple and inexpensive method of making bird boxes, they might be more inclined to aid the bluebird.

During the three years (1971-73) I have used these boxes, 82 Eastern Bluebirds, 44 House Wrens, and 4 Tree Swallows have been fledged, so you can see that the boxes are readily accepted by birds. I think, however, that given a choice between a wooden box or a milk-carton box, a bluebird would nest in the former type, but there is still much to be said for the milk-carton box, aside from its ease of construction. Hughes Hollow is a public hunting area, and my boxes are shot-up during the hunting season and have to be replaced each spring. Also, wooden boxes are far more likely to be stolen. So in areas where vandalism is a problem, the milk-carton box is ideal.

Another advantage is that I can avoid the parasite problem. After a nesting has taken place, I simply build a new box and replace the used one. The sides, paper fasteners, and wires from the old box are utilized in construction of the new one.

Milk-carton boxes can be useful when attempting to establish a breeding population of Eastern Bluebirds in a new area. Since they are so easy and quick to make, a large number can be set out to attract the birds. Then, after a pair of bluebirds has nested once, the milk-carton box can be replaced permanently by a wooden box.

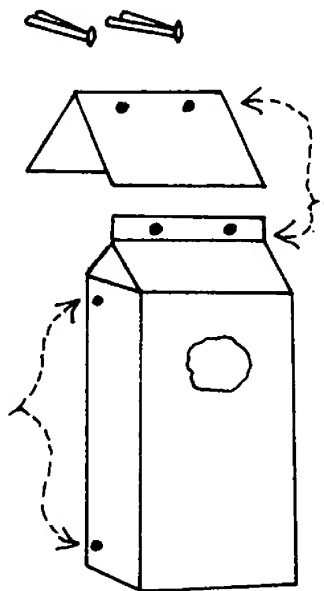
Several people have expressed the fear that these milk-carton boxes at times become too hot for the birds. I have never had a problem with overheating, even on the hottest days of summer, and I doubt that it would be a problem in Maryland. One way of reducing the internal heat is by placing the box so the entrance faces east, thus avoiding the hot afternoon sun. Also, bluebirds readily nest near the edges of woods and in deep shade. In fact, this is probably their favorite habitat at Hughes Hollow. During the first nesting of the year this is fine because the bluebird nest is well underway before House Wrens arrive; but later in the year, it may lead to grief as the aggressive House Wren moves in and displaces the bluebirds. Overall, it is probably better to place the house in the open to avoid wren predation.



The supplies needed to make these boxes are empty half-gallon, waxed cardboard milk cartons that have been thoroughly washed immediately after use, a pair of scissors, paper fasteners, a spool of copper annealed wire (or any wire that is flexible and will not rust), and a can of gray spray paint. Five cartons will make four boxes.

Completely open the tops of four cartons. Punch drainage holes in the corners and center of the bottom by pushing the scissors from the inside outward, being sure the holes are large enough to provide good drainage. Next cut the four sides from the fifth carton and bend them in half. Take a carton and close the top to its original position. Place one of the folded sides across the top, flush with the slanted surface, thus forming a roof (that part of the carton that forms the pouring spout would be at the side). Punch two holes through the roof and tab of the carton and secure them with paper fasteners.

Cut a hole for an entrance on one of the sides that the roof overhangs. The hole should be about 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the top and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and need not be a perfect circle. Small holes should be punched in the back corners near the top and bottom of the box and wire run through them. The length of the wire will depend upon the size of the object to which you plan to attach the box. Once this is done, spray paint the whole box thoroughly with a non-glossy, light gray color, or more conveniently, erect the box and then spray paint. With a little practice, one box can be made in about five minutes. I usually construct the boxes in the field near the spot where I plan to erect them. These boxes remain waterproof and in good condition throughout the summer and usually into the following spring, at which time I replace them before the bluebirds begin to nest. Zeleny (*op. cit.*) discusses how and where to erect bluebird boxes.



If anyone has questions, please contact me at (703) 620-3017 or at the address given below.

Roger B. Clapp introduced me to this type of bird house. My wife, Joan, made helpful comments on this paper, typed the final copy, and drew the figure. I thank them both.



## THE SEASON

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1973

*Chandler S. Robbins*

Good weather for nesting birds prevailed during the last half of the breeding season. Although rainfall showed a slight deficit for the period, showers were well enough spaced to prevent drought conditions. Except for the period Aug. 21-22, the few very heavy rains were both local and brief and fell onto dry ground, so flooding was minimal. July temperatures were near normal, but in August and September monthly excesses of 1° to 2° were general throughout the State.

Weak cold fronts moved across Maryland on July 5, 11, 15, and 29, Aug. 2, 11, 13, and 15, and Sept. 7, 12, 18, 20, 23, and 29. The July and August fronts came too early in the season to have much effect on songbird migration, but most of the heavy migrations that were recorded at the banding stations can be correlated with the September fronts. The one major flight that occurred without benefit of a cold front took place on Sept. 10 when light northerly winds accompanied clearing skies.

The earliest fall arrival dates for the more common species are summarized by counties in Table 1. As usual, underscored dates in the table designate banded birds, and underscored dates or counts in the text indicate new records for one of the six Sections of the State as defined by the map in Figure 1 in *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia* by Stewart and Robbins (North American Fauna No. 62, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1958).

The following observers and banders supplied the great majority of the dates in Table 1: Garrett--Mrs. William Pope; Allegany County--James Paulus, Dorothea Malec, Kendrick Y. Hodgdon; Washington County--Daniel Boone, Mrs. Alice Mallonee; Frederick County--Dr. John W. Richards Paul McKenzie; Baltimore City and County--Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bohannon, Mrs. Richard Cole, Haven Kolb, Mrs. Robert Kaestner, Bruce Beehler; Howard--Mrs. Joanne Solem, Mrs. Rosamond Munro, Morris Collins; Montgomery--Paul and Joan Woodward, Peter Pyle, Nancy and Lucy MacClintock, Dr. Fred Evenden, Robert Warfield; Prince Georges--Chandler Robbins, Danny Bystrak, Leonard Teuber; Anne Arundel--Hal and Prof. Harold Wierenga, Danny Bystrak, Prof. and Mrs. David Howard, Mrs. Rena Bishop, Mark Hoffman; Charles--Leonard Teuber, Kathleen Klimkiewicz, Dr. George Wilmot; Calvert--John H. Fales; Kent--Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mendinhall, Margery Plymire, Robert Newlin, Floyd Parks, James Gruber, Mary Anne

Table 1. Earliest Fall Arrival Dates, 1973

Species	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Somr	Worc
	10-yr	1973																	
Common Loon	--	9/28	--	0	10/27	0	0	0	0	0	9/27	0	--	10/2	9/28	9/30	9/22	9/14	9/22
Double-cr. Cormorant	--	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/7	0	0	0	0	8/27	9/22	--	8/14
Canada Goose	9/26	9/26	--	--	9/27	10/6	9/24	9/30	9/20	9/25	9/25	9/30	10/7	9/10	9/30	9/14	9/29	--	9/29
Sharp-shinned Hawk	--	9/25	--	--	9/29	--	9/29	9/27	9/12	--	9/28	9/18	--	10/19	9/16	9/23	9/22	--	--
Broad-winged Hawk	--	9/8	--	--	9/5	9/16	9/11	9/16	9/8	8/22	--	9/20	9/4	9/7	--	8/27	9/23	0	--
Pigeon Hawk	--	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	8/25	0	0	0	0	10/17	0	0	0	--	--
Sparrow Hawk	--	9/12	--	--	8/23	--	--	--	9/12	9/8	9/21	9/20	9/4	9/30	--	9/12	9/2	9/14	8/29
Semipalmated Plover	--	9/5	0	8/15	0	0	9/13	0	0	0	9/10	0	0	0	--	8/31	9/15	0	7/29
Am. Golden Plover	--	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	9/15	9/20	9/14	0	0	0	0	0	9/23	0	0
Black-bellied Plover	--	8/30	0	8/21	0	0	0	0	9/15	0	9/7	0	0	0	0	7/29	9/22	0	8/11
Ruddy Turnstone	--	8/1	0	8/15	0	0	0	0	0	0	8/1	0	0	0	0	7/29	9/22	0	7/29
Common Snipe	--	9/16	--	--	--	9/22	--	--	8/11	--	10/7	--	0	9/11	--	--	8/29	--	10/27
Spotted Sandpiper	--	8/20	0	--	7/22	10/12	9/11	7/21	8/13	0	7/13	8/26	8/26	9/7	9/21	7/10	0	0	7/8
Solitary Sandpiper	--	8/11	9/1	7/22	0	0	9/2	0	7/14	0	7/13	0	0	9/7	0	0	0	0	0
Greater Yellowlegs	8/10	8/14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/7	0	0	9/7	--	7/10	9/2	7/6	7/16
Lesser Yellowlegs	--	8/2	9/2	7/22	0	9/22	9/2	0	8/5	0	7/13	0	0	0	--	7/31	9/2	7/6	7/15
Pectoral Sandpiper	--	8/10	0	7/22	0	0	9/2	0	8/10	0	7/13	0	0	0	0	0	9/2	--	0
Least Sandpiper	8/30	7/29	9/1	7/10	0	9/22	9/2	0	7/17	0	7/13	0	9/13	0	--	7/29	7/5	--	--
Dunlin	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/1	0	0	10/19	0	--	10/6	9/15	--
Short-billed Dowitcher	--	8/9	9/1	8/26	0	0	0	0	0	0	7/23	0	0	0	0	7/10	9/22	7/6	--
Semipalmated Sandpiper	--	7/22	0	7/22	0	0	9/2	0	9/7	0	7/23	0	0	0	0	7/10	9/15	7/6	7/6
Sanderling	--	8/1	0	7/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	8/1	0	0	0	0	8/27	9/23	0	7/19
Royal Tern	--	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--	9/3	0	0	0	8/5	7/5	0	--
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	--	9/8	--	--	9/8	--	9/12	9/3	9/7	--	9/2	--	9/16	9/9	9/20	9/7	--	--	--
Black-billed Cuckoo	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0	9/20	--	9/15	0	0	0
Common Nighthawk	--	8/23	8/23	--	8/23	--	8/23	8/31	8/18	8/26	8/23	0	--	8/8	--	8/15	--	0	8/11
Yellow-shafted Flicker	--	9/11	--	--	9/22	--	9/11	9/12	9/7	9/30	9/4	--	9/5	9/5	--	9/23	--	--	--
Red-headed Woodpecker	--	9/20	--	--	9/22	0	0	0	9/8	0	9/8	9/20	0	9/5	0	9/29	9/23	0	0
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	9/28	9/29	10/4	--	9/30	9/30	9/29	9/19	9/30	9/26	9/28	--	--	9/20	10/5	9/30	9/23	9/28	--
Eastern Phoebe	--	9/24	9/30	--	--	9/17	9/11	9/12	9/6	--	9/25	9/15	9/30	9/30	9/26	9/30	9/23	--	--
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	--	9/4	0	0	0	0	8/25	0	8/23	9/9	8/25	9/11	0	8/31	0	9/9	0	0	9/29
Trail's Flycatcher	--	9/3	--	--	0	--	8/24	--	8/23	0	0	9/3	0	9/12	0	0	0	9/15	0
Least Flycatcher	--	8/31	--	0	0	0	8/26	0	8/31	8/25	9/16	9/9	0	8/30	0	0	0	9/15	0
E. Wood Pewee	--	9/10	--	--	8/31	--	8/31	--	9/11	9/24	8/22	9/23	9/16	9/3	--	9/10	--	--	--
Tree Swallow	8/30	9/4	--	0	--	0	0	0	9/11	0	7/23	--	9/20	8/21	7/22	9/16	--	9/28	8/28
Bank Swallow	--	7/6	--	0	0	0	0	0	7/17	0	7/23	0	0	--	--	7/4	7/5	7/6	--
Rough-winged Swallow	--	7/16	8/8	--	0	--	--	--	8/3	--	7/23	--	--	--	--	7/8	7/8	7/7	--
Blue Jay	9/20	9/20	--	--	9/9	--	8/26	9/19	9/20	9/22	9/19	--	9/5	9/24	--	9/7	--	9/28	--
White-breasted Nuthatch	--	10/7	--	--	--	--	9/11	7/10	10/4	--	10/24	0	--	10/17	10/12	10/7	0	0	0
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9/20	9/22	0	--	--	9/24	9/12	0	0	9/21	9/29	9/23	0	9/5	--	8/30	9/22	0	0
Brown Creeper	9/28	9/30	--	10/12	9/30	10/22	10/24	10/6	9/30	9/30	9/30	9/23	10/4	9/15	10/3	9/30	9/30	--	--
Wood Thrush	--	9/16	--	--	9/23	9/12	10/16	--	9/8	9/8	9/8	9/16	9/24	9/5	9/27	9/24	--	--	--
Swainson's Thrush	9/8	9/8	9/12	9/15	9/15	9/17	9/7	9/10	9/8	9/7	9/1	9/8	9/16	9/7	--	9/8	9/2	--	0
Gray-checked Thrush	9/15	9/11	9/17	9/20	9/15	0	9/8	0	9/8	9/7	9/8	9/11	0	9/8	10/29	9/8	9/22	9/16	0
Veery	9/4	9/2	--	--	8/26	--	9/8	--	8/24	9/5	8/25	9/1	--	9/2	--	9/9	9/2	0	0

Species	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Rowd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Bomr	Worc
	10-yr	1973																	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10/ 6	10/ 2	10/ 9	10/ 2	9/30	10/14	10/ 6	9/30	9/30	10/12	9/30	--	10/ 6	9/30	10/13	9/30	9/30	10/20	--
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9/24	9/24	9/25	9/ 4	9/23	10/12	9/29	10/ 2	9/22	9/21	9/19	--	10/15	9/19	9/29	9/23	9/23	10/ 7	9/29
Cedar Waxwing	9/ 2	9/15	--	8/23	8/12	9/11	9/28	9/23	10/13	8/31	8/ 6	9/22	8/ 5	9/16	--	9/15	9/22	9/15	9/29
Loggerhead Shrike	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/13	9/10	0	0	0	0	9/26	0	9/22	0	--
White-eyed Vireo	--	9/ 8	0	0	8/31	--	9/12	8/12	9/16	--	9/ 7	9/ 9	--	9/ 5	--	9/17	--	--	--
Solitary Vireo	--	10/ 4	10/ 3	10/15	9/23	10/ 3	0	9/19	9/30	10/10	10/ 7	0	0	10/23	0	0	10/ 6	0	0
Red-eyed Vireo	--	9/ 3	--	--	8/26	--	9/13	9/12	8/30	8/31	9/ 3	9/ 1	--	9/ 6	--	9/16	--	0	0
Philadelphia Vireo	--	--	9/19	0	9/15	0	0	0	9/12	0	9/18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-and-white Warbler	8/28	8/23	--	8/13	8/22	9/10	8/22	8/16	8/17	8/23	9/ 4	9/ 9	--	9/ 4	--	8/23	--	--	--
Blue-winged Warbler	--	9/10	0	0	8/22	--	--	9/11	9/ 4	0	9/19	0	0	9/10	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee Warbler	9/10	9/13	9/18	9/ 7	9/ 1	9/13	9/22	0	9/ 1	9/22	9/13	9/ 9	0	9/ 7	0	9/ 9	9/22	9/15	0
Nashville Warbler	9/12	9/10	9/18	8/30	8/31	9/10	9/11	9/13	9/ 8	9/ 9	9/13	0	0	9/ 9	0	9/30	9/22	0	0
Parula Warbler	--	9/14	--	--	9/15	9/10	9/ 7	9/12	9/ 5	--	9/13	9/ 1	--	9/17	9/20	9/23	9/22	10/ 7	--
Yellow Warbler	--	8/15	--	--	8/ 7	--	--	--	8/25	--	8/ 2	9/ 2	0	--	--	8/15	--	--	--
Magnolia Warbler	9/ 4	9/ 8	9/10	9/11	8/24	9/10	9/ 2	9/ 8	8/22	9/ 6	9/ 7	9/ 8	--	9/ 5	9/18	9/ 9	9/22	9/15	0
Cape May Warbler	9/14	9/12	9/12	9/11	9/15	9/10	0	9/26	9/11	8/29	9/ 8	9/30	--	8/30	9/23	9/15	9/23	0	0
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	9/ 7	9/ 9	--	8/20	8/29	9/12	9/ 2	9/17	9/ 7	8/ 1	9/13	9/23	0	9/ 8	--	9/ 9	9/22	--	9/29
Myrtle Warbler	9/30	9/29	9/18	10/ 6	9/30	9/10	9/23	9/18	9/20	10/ 3	10/ 4	10/ 4	10/ 4	9/13	10/13	9/23	9/23	10/ 7	9/29
Black-thr. Green Warbler	9/12	9/11	9/19	9/15	9/ 9	9/10	9/ 8	9/12	8/22	9/16	9/ 8	0	0	9/ 9	0	9/23	9/23	0	0
Blackburnian Warbler	9/ 5	9/ 4	--	9/ 4	8/24	9/10	9/ 1	9/12	9/ 7	8/23	9/16	0	--	8/29	0	8/28	9/23	0	0
Chestnut-sided Warbler	--	9/11	--	--	8/29	9/19	9/10	9/11	8/22	8/23	9/ 3	9/11	9/16	9/ 4	9/21	9/23	9/23	0	0
Bay-breasted Warbler	9/16	9/14	9/18	9/21	8/29	9/12	9/13	0	9/ 6	9/20	9/ 8	9/16	9/16	9/ 8	0	0	9/23	0	0
Blackpoll Warbler	9/15	9/16	9/25	9/ 6	9/16	9/10	9/ 9	0	9/16	9/30	9/13	0	9/16	9/ 7	9/20	9/30	9/23	0	0
Prairie Warbler	--	9/12	--	--	9/ 8	9/12	--	--	9/20	--	9/13	9/ 2	--	--	0	--	--	--	--
Palm Warbler	9/22	9/26	9/19	9/26	9/30	10/ 2	0	0	9/ 7	9/ 9	9/ 7	0	10/19	10/21	0	9/16	9/30	9/14	9/29
Ovenbird	--	9/ 2	--	--	8/23	--	8/21	--	8/23	9/ 1	9/ 7	8/26	--	9/ 4	--	9/ 8	--	--	--
Northern Waterthrush	9/ 1	8/31	--	9/ 7	--	0	--	0	8/ 1	8/29	8/25	9/ 2	--	8/29	--	9/10	9/15	--	--
Connecticut Warbler	9/12	9/22	9/10	9/22	--	0	9/29	0	9/ 8	9/24	9/ 9	9/22	0	9/21	0	0	0	9/30	0
Mourning Warbler	--	9/ 8	--	0	10/22	9/ 1	0	8/22	9/17	0	9/ 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilson's Warbler	--	9/ 9	9/ 9	9/10	--	8/31	8/25	9/19	8/30	9/ 9	9/ 6	0	0	9/13	0	0	0	0	0
Canada Warbler	8/23	8/25	--	8/31	8/17	9/ 3	8/18	8/23	8/20	8/23	8/25	9/ 2	--	8/29	0	9/ 9	0	0	0
Am. Redstart	8/30	8/28	9/ 2	--	8/ 6	8/31	8/16	9/11	8/12	7/26	8/31	9/ 8	--	8/14	8/25	8/23	9/ 2	9/15	--
Bobolink	8/29	9/ 1	--	--	0	0	0	0	8/23	8/29	9/ 7	0	9/ 5	0	8/29	9/ 1	9/ 2	9/15	8/31
Baltimore Oriole	--	8/26	--	--	8/17	--	9/ 5	--	8/20	8/23	8/26	--	--	9/12	8/25	9/ 1	9/ 2	--	--
Scarlet Tanager	--	9/14	--	--	8/17	--	9/13	9/12	9/17	9/20	8/22	9/16	9/ 7	9/17	9/28	9/10	9/22	--	--
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/12	9/19	9/19	9/ 7	9/23	9/17	9/20	9/19	9/13	9/ 9	9/ 8	9/23	9/19	9/22	9/ 3	9/16	9/22	0	9/29
Indigo Bunting	--	9/16	--	--	8/29	--	--	9/19	9/13	9/29	--	9/29	--	9/13	--	--	--	--	--
Purple Finch	--	10/ 6	10/ 9	9/ 7	10/ 7	10/ 6	--	--	9/12	10/24	10/21	--	11/18	10/ 3	--	9/30	9/22	--	--
Rufous-sided Towhee	--	--	--	--	10/ 1	--	--	--	9/30	--	--	--	--	9/30	--	9/23	--	--	--
Savannah Sparrow	--	9/19	9/ 1	--	--	9/22	0	9/12	9/16	0	9/19	--	--	10/19	--	--	9/22	--	--
Slate-colored Junco	10/ 6	9/30	10/10	10/ 5	9/30	10/ 2	9/28	9/29	9/30	10/24	9/25	10/ 4	10/10	9/21	9/28	9/30	9/30	--	--
White-throated Sparrow	9/25	9/30	9/29	9/21	9/30	10/ 2	9/30	9/27	9/30	9/30	9/30	9/30	9/30	9/27	10/ 8	9/30	9/30	10/21	10/ 7
Lincoln's Sparrow	--	--	9/25	0	0	0	0	10/ 1	0	0	0	9/29	0	0	0	9/23	0	0	0
Swamp Sparrow	10/ 1	10/ 4	10/ 2	--	0	--	10/26	--	9/22	10/18	10/10	9/30	10/ 6	10/18	--	--	9/30	9/30	--
Song Sparrow	--	9/23	9/ 1	--	--	10/22	9/13	10/12	9/29	--	9/17	--	--	--	--	9/23	--	--	--

Emerine; Caroline--Marvin Hewitt, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Alicia Knotts, Ethel Engle; Talbot--Jan Reese, Harry Armistead; Dorchester--Harry Armistead; Somerset--Mrs. Richard Cole, Paul, Linda and Danny Bystrak, Harry Armistead, Erana Lubbert, George Newcomer, Paul DuMont; Worcester--Robert Warfield.

Loons, Grebes, Cormorants. Six Common Loons in sight at one time at Bellevue on Aug. 4 were actively fishing and appeared healthy; since none was seen there in July, Harry Armistead believes they had recently arrived, as had one at Nelson Island, Talbot Co., July 5. Armistead counted as many as 12 Pied-billed Grebes at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Sept. 22; and he saw single stray Double-crested Cormorants at Adam and Bloodsworth Islands on July 5. Single cormorants were seen at Neavitt and at Poplar Island in Talbot County also, in July and August, with the first increase to 10 individuals on Aug. 27 (Jan Reese).

Heron and Ibises. Jan Reese reported that fish-eating birds nesting in Talbot and adjacent counties had the best reproductive success he has seen in his many years of waterfront experience. This includes the Common, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, Great Blue and Green Herons, Common Terns, Ospreys, and Kingfishers. Armistead counted 8 nesting pairs of Great Blue Herons at Adam Island in Dorchester County July 5; and a minimum of 33 active nests at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area on July 6: 3 nests with 4 young, 14 with 3, 10 with 2, and 6 with 1. His count of Cattle Egrets reached a new high of 55 at Bellevue on Sept. 1, but his September tallies of other herons were low: maximum of 41 Common Egrets and 58 Snowies in southern Dorchester County on Sept. 22. Armistead's unprecedented counts of nesting Yellow-crowned Night Herons in lower Chesapeake Bay will be published separately under his authorship. In the vicinity of Woodlawn Cemetery in Baltimore, Hervey Brackbill observed a pair of Yellow-crowns from May well into August, when they were accompanied by 2 young; this is the first time he has seen them in this area, which he has been watching for many years. Robert Warfield continued his daily sunset counts of egrets passing by his West Ocean City home. Each tally began one hour before sunset and continued for 75 minutes. Tallies on 16 days from Aug. 14 through Sept. 5 showed a mean of 219 Snowy and Common Egrets (90 percent Snowies) and 15 Louisiana Herons. Peak days for egrets were Aug. 29 (430 birds) and Sept. 4 (411 birds). After Aug. 19 the egret count reached 200 or more each day. The last two counts were made on Sept. 22 (350 egrets and 16 Louisiana Herons) and Oct. 7 (122 egrets and no Louisianas). The top tally for Louisianas was 23 birds on Aug. 31. There were 7 Louisianas at Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 2 (Armistead), and the last Glossy Ibis noted were 4 at Kent Narrows on Sept. 4 (Reese) and 5 at Irish Grove Wildlife Sanctuary on Sept. 16 (Gladys Cole and Erana Lubbert). The White Ibis is being found more and more frequently in Maryland; 1 was seen at West Ocean City on July 20 and Aug. 2 by Warfield.

Waterfowl. As early as Sept. 14, Jan Reese saw 5 Canada Geese flying into Talbot County from the north at an altitude of about 3,500 feet. General arrivals were on Sept. 29 (maximum of 250 at Blackwater Refuge by Armistead) and Sept. 30 (maximum of 700 at the mouth of the Choptank

River by Armistead). A small race of the Canada Goose was with larger birds flying south past Blackwalnut Point in southwest Talbot County on Sept. 30 (Reese and Talbot County Bird Club trip). A Snow Goose and 3 adult Blues reached Blackwater Refuge on the early date of Sept. 28 (William Julian, Refuge Manager). At Deal Island Wildlife Management Area in Somerset County, Harry Armistead counted the following on July 6: 114 Gadwalls, 1 male Pintail, and 2 Green-winged Teal; and on the next day he and others saw an American Widgeon there. At Barren Island on July 5 he found a strong flying Red-breasted Merganser. Summering vagrant waterfowl seen by Reese will be reported separately by him. Fall arrival dates for Chesapeake Bay included 5 White-winged Scoters on Sept. 23 at Hills Point in Dorchester County (Armistead), 4 Oldsquaws on Sept. 26 at Sharps Island light (Donald Meritt), and 5 Common and 30 White-winged Scoters on Sept. 30 at Tilghman (Reese).

Hawks, Eagles, Pheasants. The best hawk counts received were as follows: 1,000 Broad-wings over Finksburg in 45 minutes on Sept. 27 (William Mull), 16 Sharp-shins at Tilghman on Sept. 30 (Reese), and 7 Bald Eagles in southern Dorchester County on Sept. 22 (Armistead). Two Marsh Hawks on July 6 and 4 on July 7 at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area (Armistead and party) add to the likelihood that this species nests there each summer. Two Ring-necked Pheasants, undoubtedly escaped or released birds, were seen at Denton on Sept. 6 (A. J. Fletcher).

Rails and Gallinules. Ten Clapper Rails at Hooper Island on Sept. 10 broke the high count for Dorchester County (Armistead). One was found at Wittman in Talbot County on Aug. 27 (Reese). A Black Rail calling continuously at 6:45 p.m. on July 6 at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area (Armistead) was well past the peak of the seasonal calling period, as well as very early in the evening for vocalization; normally they do not call until after 10 p.m. Single Common Gallinules were found at Eastern Neck Refuge on Aug. 28 (Reese) and dead on the road at Smithson in Caroline County on Aug. 25 (Ethel Engle).

Shorebirds. Armistead obtained the second Dorchester County sighting for the American Oystercatcher when he found 1 on Adam Island on July 5. He saw single Golden Plovers at Hills Point on Sept. 23 and Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 29, and Robert and Peter Pyle and Harvey Mudd counted 31 Golden Plovers at the Princeton Turf Farm on Rt. 301 near Queenstown on Sept. 1. The Allegany shorebird sightings in Table 1 were all at Old Town by James Paulus, and the Sept. 2 Baltimore birds were seen at Lake Roland by Bruce Beehler; not included in the table are 5 Western Sandpipers seen by Beehler on the same day. Talbot County dates in Table 1 are by Reese, as are the following from Queen Annes County: Semipalmated Plover on July 31; and Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitcher, and Semipalmated Sandpiper on July 10. Two early Common Snipe were flushed from the Elliott marsh on Aug. 29 by Dr. John Weske. Two Upland Plover at Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 4 were an addition to the Dorchester County list (Bruce and Mrs. Cary Beehler). An unusual species for Baltimore County was a Stilt Sandpiper discovered at Loch Raven near Paper Mill Rd. Bridge by Hank Kaestner and seen on Sept. 13 by Shirley Geddes, Barbara Larrabee, and Edith Conley. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper



was carefully studied on Sept. 1 at the Princeton Turf Farm near Queenstown (Robert and Peter Pyle, Harvey Mudd).

Gulls and Terns. Jan Reese's observation of 10 Ring-billed Gulls at Turkey Point in Queen Annes County on July 4 qualifies as the earliest fall migration date of this species in Maryland. Robert Warfield warns that development of large areas on the west side of Isle of Wight Bay has seriously reduced the nesting populations of Laughing Gulls, Common and Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers in that area and that the projected development of the western side of Chincoteague Bay is likely to cause even more drastic loss of these species. A record concentration of 735 Forster's Terns on the Hills Point sandbars at high tide on Sept. 23 (Armistead) probably consisted largely of wandering birds from more southern states; on Sept. 30 the count was 420, which is more than most observers have seen at any one time. At Piney Island, 1 mile southeast of Little Deal Island, Armistead found 68 active Common Tern nests (all but 3 with eggs) on July 7. With the Forster's Terns at Hills Point there were 67 Royal Terns on Sept. 23 and 62 on Sept. 30--new high counts for this species in Dorchester County (Armistead).

Parakeets, Nighthawks. Mrs. Joseph Keane reported a pair of Monk Parakeets with a nest in Beltsville on July 6. The birds remained there for a month, but no young were raised (Stuart Robbins). A single bird seen near West Friendship on Aug. 20 by Dr. A. D. Geis was the first for Howard County. On Aug. 28, at the peak of the Common Nighthawk migration, Mrs. Rosalie Archer saw 50 to 60 nighthawks resting on a low wire in Baltimore. Warfield remarked on a good flight along the west side of Isle of Wight Bay from Aug. 11 onward; this is the first year he has seen them migrating there.

Flycatchers, Swallows. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were banded in seven counties but were not detected in the field by anyone. The earliest returning passerine was the Bank Swallow; on July 4-6, small numbers of these birds began appearing in areas where they do not nest in three Lower Eastern Shore counties (Armistead). The Cliff Swallow, always a rarity on the Lower Eastern Shore, was found at Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 15 (Mr. and Mrs. Harry Armistead) and at Hooper Island on the late date of Sept. 22 (Harry Armistead).

Jays, Nuthatches. Blue Jays had another spectacular fall migration, especially at concentration spots along the east shore of Chesapeake Bay. Reese estimated more than 5,000 at Tilghman on Sept. 30. The earliest Red-breasted Nuthatch tied the State arrival date when it appeared on Aug. 30 at St. Michaels (Reese). Although these boreal forest birds were detected in eight counties, total numbers of individuals were very small, indicating that most of the population is wintering to the north.

Catbirds, Thrushes. From all reports there was a bumper crop of young Catbirds, Veeries, and Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes. Percentages of immature birds ranged from the 70's for Gray-cheeks and 80's for Swainson's into the 90's for Catbirds, based on September ratios from eight Maryland banding stations. Counting calls from migrating



birds from 5:35 a.m. to dawn, Armistead enumerated 145 Swainson's Thrushes, 35 Gray-cheeks, and 10 Veeries on Sept. 22 at Hooper Island.

Kinglets, Waxwings. Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets at the south point of Town Hill on Sept. 4 (Paulus) tied the fall arrival record for Maryland. Golden-crowned Kinglets also arrived early, with a mass influx on Sept. 30 (7 counties). Two to 3 Cedar Waxwings were seen regularly about St. Michaels from July 24 to Aug. 20, suggesting the possibility of breeding there (Reese); there is one previous nest record for Talbot County.

Warblers. This colorful group of species is at its confusing best during the months of August and September. Armistead mentioned identifying 18 species of warblers at Taylors Island on Sept. 23; these included 2 Golden-wings, which were not only within two days of the State departure record, but constituted the second Dorchester County record for this Appalachian and Great Lakes species. On the same day he counted 35 Pine Warblers there--a species rarely seen in large numbers during the fall migration anywhere in Maryland. A very early Northern Waterthrush was banded by Peter Pyle on Aug. 1 at "Woodend," the Audubon headquarters along Rock Creek Park in Chevy Chase, Md. The failure to capture this species at other stations before Aug. 25 is largely because of lack of daily banding in August at these other stations. Canada Warblers were especially numerous this fall, with 32 banded at Adventure near Potomac (Margaret Donald and assistants) and 35 banded at Damsite (Dorothy Mendinhall and assistants). Ovenbirds were singled out as being in lower numbers than usual. Nevertheless, the Ovenbird was the species killed in largest numbers at a Baltimore TV tower on the night of Sept. 28-29 when 180 specimens were retrieved by Bud Halla. The birds retrieved were: Ovenbird, 69; Bay-breasted Warbler, 27; Black-and-white, 17; Black-throated Blue, 14; Magnolia, 13; Red-eyed Vireo, 9; Parula Warbler, 8; Tennessee, 5; and 18 miscellaneous birds of other species.

Finches and Sparrows. A further southward extension of the breeding range of the House Finch was reported to Alexander Wetmore by Hal H. Hale, who had a female feeding 2 young at his Bethesda feeder on July 25. Among the late nesting records for 1973 were a stubby-tailed Chipping Sparrow, barely able to fly, attended by an adult at Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 22 (Armistead). The period ended with a veritable deluge of arriving sparrows, largely White-throats, Swamps, and Slate-colored Juncos, triggered by the cold front of Sept. 29.

U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Laurel



## WILSON'S PHALAROPES IN ALLEGANY COUNTY

Jim Paulus

On August 25, 1973, at 7:50 a.m. (temp. 68° and foggy), I observed a Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) feeding in the shallow water

and mud flat section of a large 50-acre pond near Oldtown maintained by a local factory for industrial use.

This bird was observed for about 7 minutes at very close range (less than 20 yds.) with 7X glasses, feeding most of the time. Never before had I seen a shorebird feed in the manner that this one did. A very active feeder, this bird was constantly on the move, making all sorts of erratic gestures with its head and body as it ranged from water up to its belly, to standing on the mud flat. Out of the water, the bird fed almost on the run, always making short runs with bill held low to mud. In the water, the bird fed in various ways. First it would probe in the water, then it would hit the water with its bill, and swinging the head from side to side, it would make long dabbling runs across the water, then it would turn in circles, first one way then the other.

The legs were long and yellowish, the bill long, dark and thin. The plumage consisted entirely of 3 basic colors, white, dark brown, and very light gray. The white covered the underparts from the chin to the tail coverts. At no place in the white plumage were there any streaks, stripes, spots or barring. The light gray covered the back and continued up the back of the nape onto the crown. This gray plumage was also without any other markings. The sides of the face were white with one exception; there was a semblance of a darkish eye-line giving the bird an appearance of having a rather large white superciliary line.

The upper wing surface was a very dark brown without any stripes or bars visible. The upper tail coverts were solid white as was the tail. No barring was visible on the tail.

I intentionally flushed this bird, making it fly. The first time it flew in a small circle out over the water, coming back to land in the same place. The second time it made a small circle, would not land, but flew across the pond and disappeared over adjacent farmland.

Each time this bird flushed, it gave a low grunt. At no time did I see the bird teeter.

Feeding in the same area were Killdeer, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, and a Ruddy Turnstone. The Wilson's Phalarope was smaller than a Killdeer, considerably larger than the peeps, and in direct comparison with the Ruddy Turnstone, it appeared to be about the same size. Since no trace of the female plumage was visible, I assume that this bird was a male.

I visited the pond on the following day, but this phalarope was not seen again. On Oct. 2, 1973, however, a beautiful Wilson's Phalarope in female plumage was seen at very close range in this same pond, casually swimming about in the water and sometimes wading ashore.

## WATER BIRDS SUMMERING IN CHESAPEAKE BAY IN 1973

*Jan G. Reese*

Every summer I observe a few species of waterfowl and other water birds not common to the Chesapeake Bay at that time of year. The most interesting of these have been reported in *Maryland Birdlife* (The Season) during the past decade. In the summer of 1973, I observed more waterfowl species and individuals than in the previous 10 summers together. Presented here are sightings for the 1973 summer, probable reasons for their occurrence, and comparison with previous summer records.

Many summering waterfowl are casualties from the previous winter hunting season. These flightless birds find safe refuge in broad open water and on small offshore islands in Eastern Bay and the Choptank River. Waterfowl are spotted from a small boat while surveying Queen Annes, Talbot, and Dorchester County shorelines for nesting Ospreys. Most waterfowl are observed several times during the summer, but shy flightless ducks make accurate counts difficult. Birds resting on peat banks drop into the water at the distant sight of an approaching boat. Groups in the water spread and dive constantly when approached by a boat. Infrequent resurfacing may be accomplished with just the head above the water. Dull, worn, juvenile or female winter plumage make many identifications even more difficult.

Most observations presented here are made at or in waters adjacent to the following islands: Dorchester County--James Island, Chesapeake Bay. Talbot County--Dickinson (opposite Cambridge) and Nelson (near Neavitt) Islands, Choptank River; Hambleton Island, Broad Creek; Poplar Island, Chesapeake Bay; Long Point Island, Miles River. Queen Annes County--Long Marsh and Johnson Islands (both near Turkey Point), Eastern Bay.

## RESULTS

The various sightings are summarized in Table 1. A corresponding discussion of each species and of noteworthy individuals follows. Locations are given at the bottom of Table 1 for sightings not discussed.

Summering Common Loons have been seen in 1968, 1971, and 1972. The 4 loons seen off the mouth of Irish Creek in Choptank River on June 24, 1973 are most interesting since I observed 4 loons at the same location on June 26, 1972. In both years, 2 birds had adult breeding plumage and 2 had gray winter plumage. The loons stayed together as a group, but subsequent sightings in the Choptank River during 1973 are believed to be of one or more of these 4 loons. The 3 loons seen near Long Marsh Island in Eastern Bay on July 31 had winter plumage suggesting they were not the Choptank birds. All these loons are believed uninjured since loons are not legally hunted.

The 2 Horned Grebes seen near Hambleton Island in Broad Creek on July 7 had breeding plumage and flew. I surveyed this area weekly

beginning in March and never saw these 2 grebes prior to or after July 7. Their occurrence is intriguing. The only previous summer grebe was in 1971.

Whistling Swans are seen every summer. Most are injured, but some healthy birds fail to migrate. Both incidences are represented in 1973. A single bird in the Miles River just south of St. Michaels on May 30 had been seen regularly there with a flock of Mute Swans since early April. This swan flew well and disappeared with the nonbreeding Mute Swans in very early June. The single Whistling Swan at Hambleton Island on June 24 and the pair seen there on July 7 and Aug. 6, 15, and 27 all flew well. These 3 swans obviously were in good health and randomly moved around the Bay to feed. The Whistling Swan found on July 5 at Blackwalnut Harbor, Tilghman Island was easily captured and sent to Johns Hopkins for examination. This bird was heavily molting, emaciated, weak, and flightless owing to a wing injury. Mute Swans are seen daily in the summer since they are nonmigratory and breed locally (Reese, 1969). Nonbreeding Mutes group up in remote marshy areas in mid-June and are seldom seen the rest of the summer. Only nonbreeding Mute Swans seen at St. Michaels are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Summering Water Birds in Chesapeake Bay, 1973

	May			June						July												August						Est.
	20	24	30	5	7	13	14	15	24	4	5	7	9	10	17	21	25	29	31	1	6	7	15	17	27	Total		
Common Loon									4		2								3		1					7		
Horned Grebe													2													2		
Whistling Swan			1						1		1	2									2		2		2	4		
Mute Swan			6	18	22																					--		
Canada Goose									3				4									1			1	6		
Mallard																										--		
Black Duck						20								8			20		20		40		10	100		--		
Blue-winged Teal																					30		40	37	20	30		
Green-winged Teal	2																				7					7		
Wood Duck							3																			3		
Lesser Scaup			2					1																		3		
Common Goldeneye			1			1			1		1															4		
Bufflehead			1	1		1																				2		
Oldsquaw			7						1									1								9		
King Eider										1				1					1							1		
White-winged Scoter										3		1	1	4	1				4	18			3		4	4	25	
Surf Scoter											2	2					2		1							2		
Common Scoter									1					1												2		
Ruddy Duck													1													1		
Red-breasted Merganser						1						2	1				1	1					2			2		
Hooded Merganser														1												1		
Total birds	8	22	31	23	3	1	1	1	9	6	7	10	6	12	1	3	51	7	42	70	10	44				83		
Species	2	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	7	3	3	1	2	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	21	
Locations	a*	b		b	-	c	d	e		d	b	b	c	f	d	g	b	-	b	d	-	b	f	-	b	f		

\*a) Kent Pt. b) Nelson Is. c) Dickinson Is. d) Long Marsh Is. e) Hambleton Is. f) Poplar Is. g) Long Pt. Is.

It is difficult to differentiate between wild summering Canada Geese and those tamed or escaped from a barnyard. In Table 1 are listed only those geese believed wild. The single goose at Poplar Island on Aug. 7 and 27 flew poorly. All other summer sightings are of crippled geese.

Mallards and Black Ducks are common nesting birds in the Chesapeake Bay and are seen regularly in all locations. Only noteworthy flocks are given in Table 1. A pair of Green-winged Teal seen landing in a marsh just south of Dover Bridge along the upper Choptank River on May 20 is one day later than the extreme spring departure date for the State

(Robbins and Van Velzen, 1968). Previous summer sightings in Talbot and Dorchester Counties suggest this species may nest here. Armistead (1971) confirmed the Green-winged Teal as a nesting bird in Somerset County, so I cannot rule out the possibility of nesting in extensive marshes of the upper Choptank River. The 7 Blue-winged Teal seen flying near Hambleton Island on Aug. 6 are interesting. Blue-winged Teal are fairly common nesting birds in extensive marsh areas of neighboring counties, but seldom are seen in tidewater Talbot County west of Easton. Therefore, these teal may have been wandering from nearby nesting areas. Stewart and Robbins (1958) give Aug. 7 as an extreme fall arrival date, thus this may explain their presence. The Wood Duck is another fairly common nesting species in areas near tidewater Talbot County, but rarely seen in the tidewater. I saw 3 flying from Goldsborough Creek in the Miles River on June 7 and suspect they nested at a nearby wooded pond.

The male and female Lesser Scaup seen at Johnson Island, Eastern Bay on May 24 are believed to have been late migrants. The one at Hambleton Island on June 13 was injured. All the Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead sightings are of crippled ducks.

The Oldsquaw has been the most common diving duck found in previous summers. The flock of 7 at Nelson Island, Choptank River on May 30 was never seen again despite frequent visits to the island all summer. Possibly these ducks migrated very late. All other Oldsquaw sightings are of injured ducks. I found one dead on a sandbar at Poplar Island on July 25. Autopsy showed this bird was emaciated, but contained no lead shot or broken bones. Disease may have caused the death. This duck still had the previous winter's plumage, which was in terrible condition. The flight feathers had worn beyond use for flight and I do not think the body feathers would sustain the bird on water for long periods of time. Oldsquaws summering in other years also exhibited excessive plumage wear.

The King Eider is a rare winter duck in the Chesapeake Bay and unheard of in summer prior to 1967. Donald Meritt and I found a single King Eider summering at both Poplar Island and Nelson Island in July 1967 (Reese, 1968). Meritt found another summering at James Island in Dorchester County on July 11, 1972. The eider seen at Long Marsh Island on July 4, 10, and 31, 1973 was in the company of several scoters. Badly worn remiges on this female may be responsible for her flightlessness. Indistinct body markings indicate a body molt was in progress. Summering eiders suggest this species may be more common in winter than previously suspected. The number of summering White-winged Scoters exceeded all other species in 1973 and this species was among the most numerous species in previous summers. None of those summering in 1973 appeared capable of flight. Of the 18 seen on July 31, 13 were in a single flock at Long Point Island in the Miles River. Only one scoter was seen previously in this area all summer. The pair of Surf Scoters summering at Nelson Island and single Common Scoters at Nelson on June 24 and Poplar Island on July 9 were injured males. All 3 scoter species displayed bright plumage suggesting body molt occurred in spring.

A Ruddy Duck was seen in only one previous summer. The one with a flock of summering ducks at Nelson Island on July 7 was not seen prior to or after that date despite repeated visits to the island.

There are usually several Red-breasted Mergansers among summering ducks, but only 2 injured females summered in 1973. The Hooded Merganser seen near Hambleton Island on July 7 is only the second summer record for the Eastern Shore. Armistead (Robbins, 1965) found one near the headquarters at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on July 24, 1965. Hooded Mergansers nest in some Western Shore counties. The 1973 merganser flew well and was seen only that one time.

#### DISCUSSION

I saw a total of 7 species of water birds on July 7. This is nearly double the species seen on any other day during the summer and 3 of the 7 species were seen on this date only. On July 31 I found a flock of 13 White-winged Scoters in a regularly surveyed area where only one had been seen on previous surveys. Both these occurrences suggest some kind of a movement. I cannot offer an explanation for July 7. The July 31 concentration may have been for the purpose of molting, since scoters commonly drop their remiges in early August and group up for safety during this flightless period.

I have noticed an increase in summering Oldsquaws and scoters in the past 3 years. There are three factors that may explain this increase. First, Oldsquaws and White-winged Scoters are by far the most common diving ducks in the area of study during winter months. Secondly, refuge areas for injured or sick diving ducks are becoming more scarce each summer as land development rapidly proceeds and boats become more numerous. Consequently, grouping is forced and when I find a refuge area it is being utilized by a greater percentage of the summering waterfowl than in earlier years. Third, a hunting season on sea-ducks was extended in 1966. Sea-ducks are not hunted for food, but hunters are given a long season, a high bag limit, and allowed to kill sea-ducks from a boat for sport. Crippled ducks dive or swim away since those shot down are not retrieved by the hunter. This sport produces many casualties with surviving injured ducks staying into the summer.

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## WOOD DUCK OBSERVED FOLLOWING GEESE

Matthew C. Perry and Frank B. McGilvrey

During the period of May 5 to June 3, 1973, an unbanded male Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) was seen following members of the resident Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) flock at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. The Wood Duck walked and flew with the geese whenever they moved; it followed different groups of geese, which were individually identified by numbered collars. The Wood Duck often was seen grazing on the lawns with the geese. Examination of a fecal dropping of the duck revealed the exclusive digestive remains of red fescue (*Festuca rubra*).

This interesting phenomenon had never been observed at PWRC previously. The Wood Duck may have come from a group of 10 one-year-old male Wood Ducks that were released unbanded on May 2, 1973, approximately 1 mile from the site of the above observations. These Wood Ducks were hand-reared and held in captivity for blood physiological studies. The Wood Duck and the geese with which it was associated most often were last seen on June 3. It is assumed that the birds departed to the wooded marshes in preparation for their annual molt.

Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory, Laurel



Photo by M. C. Perry



## BIRDS IN A SMALL SUBURBAN YARD

D. H. Michael Bowen

It has gradually dawned on me that the variety of birdlife that appears either continually or occasionally in our backyard is really quite remarkable, considering the size and location. The yard, which is roughly 70 ft by 20 ft, the long dimension being parallel with the rear wall of the house, is surrounded on three sides by 5-ft high stockade fencing. The house itself was built around 1959 and is located inside the Capital Beltway, 9 miles from the Federal triangle, in a densely populated but pleasant "close-in" suburb of Washington, D.C.

There are four trees in this yard: a 30-ft tall Norway Maple, a 15-ft tall weeping cherry, a 30-ft tall Red Maple and a 6-division, 25-ft tall White Birch planted right outside the kitchen window, on which we have been hanging a variety of bird feeders. Around the borders, just inside the fence, are Mountain Laurel bushes. At the extreme rear of the yard is an extremely steep bank which we are attempting to stabilize with plantings of *Vinca minor* and (more recently) *Pachysandra*.

This yard, then, though small, is exceedingly private. Birdfeed set out through fall, winter and spring is usually just sunflower seeds held in coconut halves or regular hopper-and-tray feeders. During these seasons, "wild bird seed" (a mixture of scratch seeds like millet) is scattered under the bushes and on the bank for the benefit of sparrows. Suet, in a wire feeder, and peanut butter, in holes drilled into a section of birch log, are available in winter. Water is available year-round in a plain stone birdbath.

The following 59 species have been seen in the yard since September 1969 when we first moved in:

Mourning Dove	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Sparrow
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-shafted Flicker	Cedar Waxwing	Baltimore Oriole
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Starling	Common Grackle
Yellow-bell. Sapsucker	Red-eyed Vireo	Brown-headed Cowbird
Downy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Blue Jay	Tennessee Warbler	Cardinal
Common Crow	Nashville Warbler	Evening Grosbeak
Carolina Chickadee	Yellow Warbler	Purple Finch
Tufted Titmouse	Magnolia Warbler	House Finch
White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-thr. Blue Warbler	Pine Siskin
House Wren	Myrtle Warbler	American Goldfinch
Carolina Wren	Black-thr. Green Warbler	Rufous-sided Towhee
Mockingbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Slate-colored Junco
Catbird	Blackpoll Warbler	Tree Sparrow
Brown Thrasher	Ovenbird	Chipping Sparrow
Robin	Yellowthroat	White-throated Sparrow
Wood Thrush	Wilson's Warbler	Fox Sparrow
Swainson's Thrush	Canada Warbler	Song Sparrow
Gray-cheeked Thrush	American Redstart	

I have not listed above those birds like Fish Crow, Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Chimney Swift, Common Nighthawk, etc., that have been spied overhead but which have not actually landed in the yard.

Obviously, there is nothing unusual about this list of birds. All are perfectly normal residents or transients and all were seen in our yard at the expected time of the year. What may be notable is that many people who live in the city but who have small backyards believe that they will be unable to attract many species of birds. Our experience indicates that, with a certain amount of privacy provided them, and perhaps a little suitable food and water, birds will land anywhere. Backyard bird watching may not be adventurous, but it doesn't lack variety!

8609 Ewing Drive, Bethesda

#### SECOND LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FOR CAREY RUN SANCTUARY

As of Dec. 15, 1973, 354 individuals and chapters had contributed a total of \$12,650 toward the purchase of the 110-acre addition to Carey Run Sanctuary. Those who have contributed since the first list was published in the September issue of *Maryland Birdlife* are listed below.

Allegany County Bird Club.

Mrs. Harry A. Barrett

Mr. & Mrs. Donald C. Blaisdell

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Bohanan

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Dale Braeuninger

Mr. & Mrs. L. B. Buterbaugh

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Mr. & Mrs. Charles D. Cremeans

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Cdr. & Mrs. Edward P. Wilson

Mrs. Charles Winsor

Dr. & Mrs. Frank G. Witebsky

#### HARBORTOWN UPDATE

Mrs. Joseph Fehrer has called attention to errors in the report on the proposed Harbortown development (*Maryland Birdlife* 29:62). Instead of "\$40,000 per person development" this should read "40,000 person development." Those wishing to support litigation to uphold the Master Plan for Worcester Co. may send contributions to Worcester Environmental Protection Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 325, Snow Hill, Md. 21863.

## COMING EVENTS

\* \* \* \* \* I M P O R T A N T   N O T I C E   \* \* \* \* \*

Much of this program was arranged last summer before winter Daylight Time or gasoline shortages were anticipated. We expect to hold all scheduled meetings as announced, but please dress warmly.

Field trips, especially overnight trips, may be subject to change. Best verify starting times. Please cooperate in car-pooling, cost-sharing, and fuel conservation practices. Verify gasoline availability before undertaking overnight trips marked with asterisks (\*). Thank you.

- Jan. 3 FREDERICK Monthly Meeting. Photos One Year Later, by Rick Warfield and Augie Selckmann Jr. Winchester Hall, 7:30.  
 4 HARFORD Dinner Meeting. Presbyterian Church, Churchville, 6:15  
 4 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Summer Trip to Arctic Circle by Tony White. Anne Arundel Co. Library, West St., 8 pm.  
 10 HOWARD Monthly Meeting. South Pacific Birds, Dr. C. Kepler.  
 12 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Cove Pt. & Solomons. 8 a.m., Dick Heise.  
 12 WASHINGTON Trip to Indian Springs.  
 12 BALTIMORE Junior Meeting. Unusual Pet Show (467-8221).  
 12 FREDERICK Trip. Birds from the Hodges' Window. 7:30 a.m.  
 12 HOWARD Feeder Trip. Meet Swansfield Elem. School, 8:30  
 14 HARFORD Trip to Bombay Hook Refuge, Del. John Wortman.  
 15 TALBOT Audubon Film, Acadian Reflections by Robert E. Fultz.  
 16 TALBOT Monthly Meeting. Chesapeake Bay Osprey by Jan Reese.  
 16 ALLEGANY Monthly Meeting. Film Festival, ACC Auditorium, 7:30.  
 17 MONTGOMERY Annual Social. Members bring 4 or 5 birding slides.  
 19 PATUXENT Trip to NASA, Greenbelt. 9th & Montgom., Laurel, 8.  
 19 MONTGOMERY Trip to Gude's Nursery, Rockville. 7:30 a.m.  
 19 HOWARD Field Trip to Old Camp Woodbine. Swansfield Sch., 1 pm.  
 22 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. Birds of Australia, Don Messersmith.  
 22 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. Non-Game Section of DNR, Bud Halla.  
 26 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Weather by Victor Turner. Cylburn, 10 am.  
 26 HOWARD Field Trip to E. Neck Refuge. Swansfield Sch., 8:30.  
 27 MONTGOMERY Trip to Pt. Lookout for waterfowl & Great Cormorants.  
 27 WICOMICO Monthly Meeting. Asbury Methodist Church, Salisbury.  
 29 BALTIMORE Round Table Discussion: Keeping Bird Records is Fun. Cylburn Mansion, 8 pm. Snow date, Feb. 5. O. Lescure.
- Feb. 1 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Lecture by Dr. Lawrence Murphy. A.A. County Library, West St., Annapolis, 8 p.m.  
 2 PATUXENT Afternoon trip for hawks and owls only. Meet 1 p.m. on Montgomery St. at 9th St., Laurel. J. Sheppard.  
 \*2-3\* Pelagic Trip from Ocean City. Reservations for Sunday boat still available (\$14). Phone R. Rowlett (498-6091).  
 6 KENT Monthly Meeting. Color films: Water Birds, Birds that Migrate, and Poisonous Reptiles of Maryland. Remington Farms Lodge, 7:30 p.m.  
 8 TALBOT Audubon Film, Malheur: Marsh, Meadow, and Mountain by James D. Hammond. Easton High School, 8 p.m.  
 9 BALTIMORE Junior Talk, Mysteries of the Ocean by Dr. A. H.

- Oleynick. Cylburn Mansion, 10 a.m.
- Feb. 9 PATUXENT Annual Feeder Trip. Meet Montgomery St. at 9th St., Laurel, for half-day trip to area feeders. E. Robbins.
- 14 HOWARD Monthly Meeting. Breeding Bird Atlas Project, by K. Klimkiewicz & J. Solem. Swanfield Elem. Sch., 7:30.
- 15 CAROLINE Monthly Meeting. Public Library, Denton. 7:30 p.m.
- \*15-17\* MONTGOMERY Annual Winter Coastal Trip. Destination uncertain pending information on gasoline availability.
- \*16-18\* BALTIMORE Chincoteague Weekend. Register by Feb. 6 with Mrs. Janet Ganter (889-4601). Leader, Charles Vaughn.
- \*16-18\* ANNE ARUNDEL Winter Weekend at the Ocean. Call Tony White (1-261-5035) for details, carpools, schedule, etc.).
- 20 TALBOT Monthly Meeting. Prize Winning Pictures by Dickson Preston. Christ Church Parish House, Easton, 8 p.m.
- 20 ALLEGANY Monthly Meeting. Four Seasons at Carey Run, a multimedia slide presentation by John Willetts. Location not announced (call 722-1666), 7:30 p.m.
- 21 MONTGOMERY Monthly Meeting. Birding in Alaska by Paul DuMont and Bob Pyle. Perpetual Bldg., Basement Auditorium, 7401 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, 8 p.m.
- 22 BALTIMORE Annual Meeting & Social Evening. Bluebirds by Dr. Lawrence Zeleny. Northwood-Appold Church, SE corner Lock Raven Blvd & Cold Spring Lane, 8 p.m.
- 23 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Insects by Dr. Scarborough. Cylburn, 10.
- 24 TALBOT Possible Trip to Ocean City. Details at Feb. 20 meeting
- 25 WICOMICO Monthly Meeting. Asbury Methodist Church, Salisbury.
- 26 BALTIMORE Meeting. Avian Architecture by Jerry Longcore. Cylburn Mansion, 8 p.m. Snow date, Mar. 5.
- 26 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. Maryland's Pelagic Birds by Richard Rowlett. St. Philips Parish Hall, 6th & Main, Laurel, 7:45 p.m.
- 26 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. Emma K. Doub School, 7:30 p.m.
- Mar. 1 ANNE ARUNDEL Annual Lecture. Luther C. Goldman. Annapolis Junior High, Forest Drive & Spa Rd., 8 p.m. \$1.50.
- 1 HARFORD Dinner Meeting. Presbyterian Church, Churchville. For reservations: Mrs. Walter Kohout, 316 S. Stokes St., Havre de Grace 21078.
- 2 BALTIMORE Trip to Blackwater Refuge. Meet Visitor Center, 9 am. Leader, Craig Jeschke (747-8457).
- 2 HARFORD Trip to Eastern Neck Refuge. John Wortman (939-3246).
- 2 PATUXENT and HOWARD Birding Equipment Workshop with classes in binocs, telescopes, tape recorders, photography, bird songs. At home of Mrs. Nan Rhinelander, Folly Quarter Rd., Glenelg (286-2427), 1:15 to 4:30 p.m.
- 5 DEADLINE for Registration, Adult Leadership Training, M.O.S.
- 6 KENT Monthly Meeting. Program by Juniors. Remington Farms Lodge, 7:30 p.m.
- 9 BALTIMORE Trip to Gunpowder State Park. Meet Korvette's parking lot, Perring Plaza, Balto Beltway Exit 30, 8 a.m.
- 9 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Patapsco State Park by J. Krueger. Cylburn
- 12 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar I at Denton.
- 12 HOWARD Monthly Meeting. Swansfield Elem. School, 7:30 p.m.

- Mar. 14 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar I at Baltimore.  
 15 CAROLINE Monthly Meeting. Public Library, Denton, 7:30 p.m.  
 16 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Eastern Neck Nat'l Wildlife Refuge. Meet at Anglers, US 50 W of Sandy Pt., 7:30 a.m.  
 17 BALTIMORE Trip to Liberty Lake. Meet Franklin Sr. High School, Reisterstown (Beltway Exit 20 W), 8 a.m.  
 19 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk. Meet Robert E. Lee Park, footbridge below dam, 8 a.m. Grace Naumann (377-9032).  
 20 ALLEGANY Public Nature Program: Jean Worthley, ACC Auditorium, Cumberland, 7:30 p.m.  
 20 TALBOT Monthly Meeting. Wildlife at Aberdeen by Ellis G. Porter. Mayor & Council Office, Easton, 8 p.m.  
 21 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar I at Hagerstown.  
 21 MONTGOMERY Birding in the South Sea Islands, by Dr. Donald Messersmith, Perpetual Bldg., Bethesda. 8 p.m.  
 22 BALTIMORE Audubon Film. The Living Jungle by Greg McMillan. Dumbarton Jr. High, Dumbarton Rd. W of York Rd, 8 p.m.  
 23 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Sandy Pt. State Park, Corcoran Woods. Meet at Anglers, US 50, 7:30 a.m. Phyllis Steen.  
 23 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Reptiles & Amphibians, R. Dunn. Cylburn.  
 24 WICOMICO Monthly Meeting. Asbury Methodist Church, Salisbury.  
 26 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk. See Mar. 19.  
 26 BALTIMORE Lecture. Decision on the Bay, by Dr. John Foerster. Cylburn Mansion, 8 p.m.  
 26 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. Amphibian Symphony, by David Hardy. St. Philips Parish Hall, 6th & Main, Laurel, 7:45.  
 26 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. Emma K. Doub School, 7:30 p.m.  
 30 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Field Practicum, Blackwater Refuge  
 31 TALBOT Breakfast Hike. Hosts Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Price. All spring hikes meet at Easton Library, 7 a.m.
- Apr. 2 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. Bohanans.  
 3 KENT Monthly Meeting. Plan for Spring Count. Remington Lodge  
 4 BALTIMORE Spring Birds and Wildflowers at Cylburn. Special help for beginners. Banding demonstrations. Cylburn, 9 a.m.  
 5 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Raptor Identification, by Bill Clark. Anne Arundel Co. Library, West St., 8 p.m.  
 5 BALTIMORE Social Evening. Florida Birds, by David Lee. Cylburn, 8  
 6 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 am. See Mar. 19. E. Wedge 664-3581.  
 6 PATUXENT Woodcock & Owl Trip. Lv Montgomery at 9th St., 6:45 pm  
 6 BALTIMORE Junior Banding Demonstration. Cylburn, 8 and 9:30 a.m.  
 7 TALBOT Breakfast Hike. Mr. & Mrs. H. Henry Jr. See Mar. 31.  
 8-12 BALTIMORE Daily Vacation Bird and Nature Walks for Juniors. Cylburn Mansion, 9 a.m.  
 9 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar II, Denton.  
 9 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. S. Geddes.  
 11 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar II, Baltimore.  
 11-13 ALLEGANY Bus Tour of Sanctuaries & Refuges. Harman (722-1666).  
 12 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip. Camp Letts Nature Trail. Anglers, 7:30 a.m.  
 14 ALLEGANY Spring Arrival Trip. Call Elyse Harman (722-1666).  
 16 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. S. Geddes.  
 17 TALBOT Monthly Meeting. Arctic Summer, V. Edwin Unger. Christ Church Parish House, Easton, 8 p.m.

- Apr. 17 ALLEGANY Monthly Meeting. Spring Wildflowers, by Dr. Glenn Workman. ACC Auditorium, Cumberland, 7:30 p.m.
- 18 BALTIMORE Cylburn Birds and Wildflowers, 9 a.m. See Apr. 4.
- 18 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar II, Hagerstown.
- 18 MONTGOMERY Monthly Meeting. Perpetual Bldg., Bethesda, 8 p.m.
- 19 CAROLINE Monthly Meeting. Public Library, Denton, 7:30 p.m.
- 19-21 BALTIMORE Adult Nature Camp, Milburn Landing State Park, Worc.Co.
- 20 HARFORD Trip to Elk Neck State Park. John Wortman (939-3146).
- 20 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. J. Schreiber.
- 20 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Detectives at Work. C.Fisher. Cylburn, 10.
- 20 PATUXENT Spring Flower Hike. Montgomery at 9th, Laurel, 8:30 am.
- 20 ANNE ARUNDEL Woodcock Watch. Parole Plaza, Riva Rd.entr., 6:30 pm.
- 21 TALBOT Breakfast Hike. Hostess Margaret Smith. See Mar. 31.
- 21 BALTIMORE Trip to Loch Raven. Meet Self-Serv. P.O., Towson Plaza parking lot, Dulaney Val. Rd. & Goucher Blvd., 8 a.m.
- 22 WICOMICO Monthly Meeting. Asbury Methodist Church, 8 p.m.
- 23 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. Mrs. Larrabee.
- 23 TALBOT Audubon Film, Four Fathom World, by Harry Pederson. Easton High School, Mecklenburg Ave., 8 p.m.
- 23 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. LeConte's Thrasher, Jay Sheppard. St.Philips Parish Hall, 6th & Main Sts., Laurel, 7:45.
- 23 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. Emma K. Doub School, Hagerstown.
- 25 BALTIMORE Cylburn Birds and Wildflowers, 9 a.m. See Apr. 4.
- 25 BALTIMORE Trip to Rock Run. Towson Plaza at P.O., 8 a.m.
- 27 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. Jane Daniels.
- 27 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Field Practicum, Rock Run.
- 28 TALBOT Breakfast Hike. Hosts Mr. & Mrs. Gardner Tillinghast.
- 28 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to New Design Road and Lilypons. Parole, 7:30.
- 30 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. B. Larrabee.
- May 2 BALTIMORE Trip to Loch Raven. Self-Serv PO, Towson Plaza, 8 a.m.
- 3 HARFORD Dinner Meeting. Presbyterian Church, Churchville, 6:15
- 3 BALTIMORE Audubon Film, Migration Mysteries, by Walter J. Breckenridge. Dumbarton Jr. High School, 8 p.m.
- 4 STATEWIDE BIRD COUNT. Contact the organizer for your county or Chapter and help us get good coverage of all of Maryland's 23 counties. Everyone welcome. No fee.
- 4 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Wildflowers by Mrs. Francis Rackemann. Cylburn Mansion, Baltimore, 10 a.m.
- 5 TALBOT Breakfast Hike at Mill Creek Sanctuary. Meet at Easton Library, 7 a.m. Host: John Wanuga.
- 7 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar III, Denton.
- 7 STATE LEADERSHIP TRAINING Seminar III, Baltimore.
- 7 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. J. Daniels.
- 9 BALTIMORE Trip to Woodstock. Meet Towson Plaza, 8 a.m. or Woodstock Bridge over Patapsco River, 9 a.m.
- 10-12 STATE CONVENTION, Ocean City. New location this year. Details to be announced later.
- 11 BALTIMORE Market Day at Cylburn Park, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- 12 BALTIMORE Trip to Horsehead Woods. Meet W side of RR Bridge on McDonogh Rd 1 mile W of Reisterstown Rd, 8
- 14 BALTIMORE Lake Roland walk, 8 a.m. See Mar. 19. J. Daniels.



## CONTENTS, DECEMBER 1973

MOS Bluebird Project Results for 1973	<i>Lawrence Zeleny</i>	139
Late Summer Mating of the Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>David Lee and Barbara Rothgaber</i>	143
Amphibians, Reptiles & Mammals of Irish Grove	<i>David S. Lee</i>	143
The President's Page	<i>Barclay E. Tucker</i>	149
An Easily Made Bluebird House	<i>Paul W. Woodward</i>	151
The Season--July, August, September, 1973	<i>Chandler S. Robbins</i>	153
Wilson's Phalaropes in Allegany County	<i>Jim Paulus</i>	159
Water Birds Summering in Chesapeake Bay in 1973	<i>Jan G. Reese</i>	161
Wood Duck Observed Following Geese	<i>Matthew C. Perry and Frank B. McGilvrey</i>	165
Birds in a Small Suburban Yard	<i>D. H. Michael Bowen</i>	166
Contributors for Carey Run Sanctuary		167
Announcements		167
Coming Events		168



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**Editor:** Chandler S. Robbins, Migratory Bird Populations Station,  
Laurel, Md. 20810  
**Asst. Editor:** C. Douglas Hackman, 3033 Woodside Ave., Balto. 21234  
**Art Editor:** William N. Schneider  
**Production:** Gladys Cole, Romell Decker, Linda Hackman, Bud Letsch  
and Marlene Letsch  
**Mailing:** Barbara Larrabee and committee



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